



Kimberly A. Foster
Executive Director

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

COMMISSIONERS:

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MARTHA TREVINO POWELL
SANDRA RUDNICK
STACEY SAVELLE
ADELINA SORKIN, LCSW/ACSW, CHAIR
DR. HARRIETTE F. WILLIAMS
TRULA J. WORTHY-CLAYTON

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **April 20, 2009**, in Room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Carol O. Biondi | Tina Pedersen |
| Patricia Curry | Martha Trevino Powell |
| Susan Friedman | Sandra Rudnick |
| Helen Kleinberg | Adelina Sorkin |
| Dr. La-Doris McClaney | Dr. Harriette F. Williams |
| Rev. Cecil Murray | Trula J. Worthy-Clayton |
| Steven M. Olivas, Esq. | |

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Ann Franzen
Stacey Savelle

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Sorkin.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Action

Motion by Commissioner McClaney, seconded by Commissioner Williams, the Agenda for April 20, 2009 was unanimously approved.

IV. DIALOGUE WITH CHIEF DEPUTY AND DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS(DCEO'S)

PROLOGUE

Vice Chair Olivas gave a brief overview of the Commission's priority areas: Crossover Youth, Prevention, Relative Care, Transition Age Youth (TAY), and Wellness. Vice Chair Olivas also discussed the correspondence between Miguel Santana and the Commission regarding collaboration efforts and point people for each area. Vice Chair Olivas expressed the Commission's desire to partner with the Chief Executive Office (CEO) on these areas, to come up with timelines and funding sources.

Public Safety Cluster – Sharon Harper

Miguel Santana stated that the Public Safety DCEO, Doyle Campbell has retired and Ms. Harper, Chief Deputy CEO, is temporarily working on the Public Safety issues. Ms. Harper was not able to attend due to a Press Conference that was scheduled regarding the County Budget.

Operations Cluster – Ellen Sandt

Ms. Sandt was introduced to the Commission, however, she was unable to stay and participate in the discussion as she was called away regarding the CEO press conference on the County Budget. Lari Sheehan informed the Commission that Ms. Sandt's Cluster includes the Internal Services Department, Auditor-Controller, Chief Information Office, Assessor, and the Treasure-Tax Collector.

Health, Mental Health and Public Health Cluster – Sheila Shima

Ms. Shima introduced herself and informed the Commission of the various departments that comprise the Health, Mental Health and Public Health cluster including the Departments of Health Services, Mental Health (DMH) and Public Health. She stated that Crossover Youth and TAY are important areas for DMH and Wellness is an area covered by Public Health. Each department has done a lot of planning in these areas and they are looking forward to collaborating with DCFS and Probation to improve the services they provide.

Children, Families and Adults Well-Being Cluster – Miguel Santana

Miguel Santana provided a brief overview of the work efforts that have been initiated. He further discussed the staff assignments for his office and the work in progress as follows:

- **Wellness**

Mr. Santana discussed the motion by Supervisor Knabe last week on Wellness, Childhood Obesity among children in care, and the effects of Psychotropic Medication on obesity. The CEO has been directed to work in conjunction with several departments and stakeholders and report back to the Board of Supervisors in 120 days. Bryan Mayan of Mr. Santana's staff and Richard Martinez of Ms. Shima's staff are assigned to the Wellness group, and they are working on a list of stakeholders for the group, including Vice Chair Pedersen and Chair Sorkin. Mr. Santana also announced the opening of the San Gabriel Valley HUB

on May 11, 2009. Invitations for the opening will be sent out soon. The entire County is now covered by medical HUBs.

- TAY
Mr. Santana stated that Vice Chair Curry has begun meeting with Garrison Smith, of his staff regarding TAY. His staff will be sending confirmation letters regarding issues that were discussed. Mr. Santana stated that it is his policy to have his staff recap meetings in writing to confirm issues discussed and to avoid any misunderstanding of what is expected.
- Relative Care
The Commission was informed that Brian Mayan and Karen Herberts of Mr. Santana's staff will be on the Relative Caregiver group. The goal was for all groups to begin meeting by April 17, 2009. However, due to the CEO's workload on the budget and the stimulus, some groups have not been able to meet yet.
- Prevention
The Commission was informed that Carlos Pineda is assigned to the Prevention group. The goal for this group is to find permanent funding and develop a network of supportive services for parents. There is currently a gap in the funding source. The budget cutbacks show that the County is \$200 million in the red. The County is doing all they can to prevent layoffs and to protect core programs. Prevention is high on the list of the programs for continued funding.
- Crossover
Mr. Santana stated that Jenny Serrano and Veronica Cox will cover Crossover Youth. Veronica Cox is currently on leave but is expected to return shortly. In the meantime, Jenny Serrano will be taking the lead with Crossover. They will also include a staff person from Probation.

Community and Municipal Services Cluster– Lari Sheehan

Ms. Sheehan introduced herself to the Commission and provided information on the departments included in her cluster and how they relate and interface with the Commission's priorities and across clusters. She further stated that, in particular, Prevention, Wellness, and TAY are areas that crossover into her cluster. For example, wellness is a big issue for Parks and Recreation and they are working on exercise themes for the coming months. Also, Florence-Firestone is a pilot area for the Community Enhancement Program. Four focus areas of this program are: public safety, code enforcement, economic development, and traffic safety/mobility. They are also trying to include the Gang Initiative in public safety.

Vice Chair Olivas inquired about representatives from Ms. Shima's and Ms. Sheehan's clusters to attend Commission meetings and give input. Ms. Shima stated that Richard Martinez and David Seidenfeld are assigned to Wellness and she will provide their contact information to the Commission Executive Director. Ms. Sheehan stated that Anthony Baker will be assigned to Wellness and Dorthea Park will be

assigned to Prevention. She will also forward their contact information to the Commission office.

Commissioner Kleinberg stated that the Commission is very interested in integrated services and requested information on the existing integrated programs that have proven to be successful. She stated that the Commission would like to expand or combine these programs and make them client-focused in order to achieve great outcomes for families and children. She also stated that the Commission is frustrated over the separation of departments and pots of money, such as the prevention money, stimulus money and MHSA money. Commissioner Kleinberg further stated that there was MHSA money that was not used last year. She also stated that there are many great resources in the private sector. She asked that the Commission and CEO work together, be creative, and think out of the box. She stated that the Commission would like to work with the CEO to integrate services in the focus areas identified by the Commission. She also stated that integration needs to be done at the service level not only at the management level.

Sheila Shima acknowledged that although there are many areas that currently have integrated services, she agreed that much more needs to be done with integrated services. Miguel Santana stated that integration is happening every day within the CEO clusters. Mr. Santana stated that one of the areas they are integrating services is on the gang strategy. He further stated that the DCEOs meet several times a week, share what they are doing and finding opportunities to work together. They also discuss how to develop efficiencies in this budget climate. One instance is they are going to be merging some Commissions, such as integrating the Human Relations Commission into the Department of Community and Senior Services. He also stated that integration of services is at the top of the list for each CEO cluster in their goals and objectives and is a priority for the CEO and the Board of Supervisors.

Vice Chair Curry inquired about the monitoring mechanism for how the MHSA money is spent and if there is any accountability. Sheila Shima agreed that accountability is important. She further stated that MHSA funding stream has very specific parameters and a framework that the department needs to be held accountable for.

Vice Chair Curry expressed concerns regarding getting the stimulus money to the community. Miguel Santana stated that one issue is the limited time frame in dealing with stimulus money as outlined in the stimulus guidelines; and another is the lack of time for RFPs. He stated that it usually takes one year to do an RFP, and in that time, 60% of the money should be spent. He further stated that they are looking at existing contracts to include stimulus money.

Commissioner Biondi expressed concern about the lack of connections being made in Probation. She stated that Wraparound services are a perfect example of Probation not using services. She expressed concern that the Public Safety cluster is not at the table. Commissioner Biondi discussed concerns about the Passport concept that the Second Supervisorial District has revived, and inquired about the Juvenile Reimbursement Workgroup ordered by the Board. Miguel Santana stated that Sharon Harper is preparing

for the CEO press conference which will begin in ten minutes. He further stated that he did not know the status of these programs and would follow-up.

Follow-Up

Miguel Santana agreed to follow-up on the status of the Passport concept that the Second Supervisorial District revived and the Juvenile Reimbursement Workgroup ordered by the Board.

Chair Sorkin expressed appreciation to the DCEOs and expressed the interest of the Commission to the integration of funding, accountability of the services being delivered, and to ensuring MHSA money is delivered to the children. The DCEOs excused themselves from the remainder of the meeting, as they were required to attend the CEO press conference on the Budget.

Commissioner Williams requested clarification regarding the two contact people she will be working with, Brian Mahan and Karen Herberts. She inquired which clusters they belong to. Chair Sorkin responded that they both are part of Miguel Santana's cluster.

V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Trish Ploehn announced that at tomorrow's Board meeting, Supervisor Yaroslavsky will be acknowledging the Valley Beth Shalom synagogue for sponsoring their Tenth Annual Prom 101. There were approximately 60 DCFS teen girls that participated. Prom dresses, shoes, and make-up were all provided and the girls walked down a red carpet. She stated that this was a great self-esteem builder for these girls.

Ms. Ploehn also announced that DCFS has an anonymous donor that gave \$35,000 to ensure that the South Bay Torrance Visitation Center can continue for another year. As a result of this donation, they will also be expanding the number of visits from 42 to 70 visits per month.

Ms. Ploehn invited the Commissioners to a South County and Faith-Based Partners First Annual Family Fun Day on May 16, 2009. Ms. Ploehn commended the Faith-Based community in the South Bay for being very involved in supporting families and the community.

Ms. Ploehn stated that L.A. County was one of seven entities selected for a Social Policy Initiative. The other six participants are: Alleghany County, Pennsylvania; Jefferson County, Kentucky; Montgomery County; San Antonio, Texas; Polk County, Iowa; and North Carolina County. The CEO, DCFS, DPSS and DCSS will be working together to connect economic success with child welfare and poverty issues. As part of this and in addition to this, they are looking at when a child is removed from a family on CalWORKS, their money is then discontinued, the services may continue for up to six months but they will most likely lose their home. Without a home, the child cannot be reunified with the family. They are trying to come up with a way to get a State waiver or to modify legislation to pilot a project to continue fiscal support for a family that has a good chance of reunification and to blend the federal stimulus money into this. Ms.

Ploehn requested input from the Commissioners on ideas, issues or problems to use federal stimulus money to ease the issue between poverty and child welfare. They will be meeting again in the middle of May and she welcomes any input.

Vice Chair Curry expressed appreciation to Trish Ploehn for staying after the last meeting and discussing the peer counselor proposal with Commissioners Savelle and Curry. Ms. Ploehn stated that she requested that Miguel Santana and Jenny Serrano write the proposal as broad as possible to keep the concept in tact but allow time to figure out how to include a partnership with community-based agencies and a way to sustain it. Vice Chair Curry also expressed appreciation to Trish Ploehn for taking the information on the stimulus package to Miguel Santana for consideration before the finalization of the report to the Board of Supervisors.

Commissioner Kleinberg expressed appreciation to Vice Chair Curry for all her work on the stimulus package. She also suggested to Trish Ploehn, as an idea for the Social Policy Initiative to work on, the lack of support systems for families traumatized not only by poverty but by other factors such as the incarceration of a parent, a sibling going into probation, or the death of a child.

Commissioner Biondi stated that ten years ago, Probation youth were not benefiting from the Independent Living Program (ILP) funds. Commissioners Curry and Biondi worked very hard to have them included and she now fears that these youth are still not getting the benefit of the same esteem building moments as DCFS youth. She specifically expressed concern about the cancellation of the Probation Department's graduation program, "Success is our Future", due to the lack of ILP funds from DCFS. Trish Ploehn stated that this has been worked out and the event is scheduled for sometime in May. Commissioner Worthy-Clayton expressed appreciation to Ms. Ploehn for finding a solution to this issue.

Commissioner Rudnick stated she has concerns regarding the "White-Collared Workers" who have lost their jobs and are ill-equipped to function in the system. She stated that she also has concerns regarding the returning veterans, who come back home to a changed environment from when they left, there are no jobs, no money, possibly living in cars, and they need help before they slip into the system. Commissioner Kleinberg stated that they are also looking at veteran's money under MHSA. Trish Ploehn stated that Veterans Affairs is in the same cluster as hers and she will discuss this issue with them.

Follow-Up

Trish Ploehn stated that she will follow-up on the issue of services to returning veterans with the Veterans Affairs Department Head.

Vice Chair Curry stated that there is stimulus money that could be used for families that are having difficulty with rent and foreclosure. She inquired how they can get information to relative care providers, faith-based support groups, and at-risk families on how to access available funds. Trish Ploehn stated that they are working on this and will be coming up with a method to inform people of the help available and how to access this money.

Commissioner Trevino Powell reminded the Commission that next week, Thursday, April 30, 2009, from 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. is the Commission's 25th Anniversary celebration.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 6, 2009

No action taken.

VII. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Sorkin stated that both Vice Chair Pedersen and she presented to the Board of Supervisors on April 14, 2009 regarding Supervisor Knabe's Board Motion on Obesity. She shared with the Commission a prop used at the Board meeting (5lbs. of fake fat). The CEO was directed to convene various stakeholders including the Commission, come up with a plan, and report back to the Board in 120 days. Vice Chair Pedersen stated that the Motion also included psychotropic medication and its effect on childhood obesity and the development of a Child Wellness Task Force and the training related to that.

Commissioner Trevino Powell requested clarification regarding the correspondence between the CEO and the Commission indicating liaisons for the Commission's focus areas. She inquired on the progress and if this effort to collaborate was moving forward. Chair Sorkin replied that it is in progress, meetings have already begun and more will continue.

Chair Sorkin announced that Commissioner Biondi was honored at the 30th Anniversary of United Friends of the Children (UFC). The theme was "Change A Life Forever". Chair Sorkin stated that a young woman, a former resident of MacLaren, recalled how someone had taken the time to take her shopping on her birthday and that these women from UFC still remained in her life. Chair Sorkin stated that one of the programs at UFC is to stay with the youth through college for 5 years, and sometimes more. Commissioner Kleinberg commended the United Friends of the Children. She stated that a lot of these children are very difficult and don't trust anyone and UFC stays with the children long enough to rebuild trust.

Chair Sorkin also reminded the Commission of the 25th Anniversary of the Commission on April 30, 2009.

Chair Sorkin stated that Commissioner Franzen's mother passed away and the information on the services was distributed in the Commissioner's packets.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Executive Director, Kim Foster announced that the Commission is in 100% compliance in regard to the Statement of Economic Interest Forms (Form 700). She also stated that she included an informational article regarding the Brown Act in the Commissioner's packets. Ms. Foster stated that the Commission is also in compliance with the Brown Act.

Ms. Foster informed the Commission that there have been problems with the on-line program for the Ethics Training and they are continuing to work on it. For the Commissioners that still have training pending, Human Resources (HR) will be releasing additional dates for in-house training. Ms. Foster stated that the contact person in HR is Norma Duran (213) 974-1421, if the Commissioners have any questions or require further information regarding Ethics Training.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Public Comments.

X. ADJOURN

Chair Sorkin adjourned the meeting.